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METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR RETAIL CLUB MEMBERSHIP
AUTHORIZATION

This application is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Application No.
10/347,731, filed January 21, 2003, ^{is now U.S. Patent 6,991,160} ~~now pending~~, the entire contents of which are hereby
incorporated by reference.

Field of the Invention

The present invention generally relates to systems and methods for remote
authorization of fuel dispensing and authorization or confirmation of participation in frequent
shopper programs, club memberships, and the like.

Background of the Invention

Many gasoline retailers are reporting an increase in gasoline theft, or "drive-offs." A
drive-off occurs whenever an automobile refueling at a remote, enabled fuel dispenser drives
off without its occupants having paid for the gasoline. Drive-offs cost the industry nearly
\$300 million a year, which is more than \$3,000 per store selling gas, and it is no longer just
teenagers taking a few dollars for a thrill. It is now grown adults taking a full tank, which
costs as much as \$50 when the automobile being filled up is a sport utility vehicle. Many
service station owners make only pennies a gallon. Thus, to make up for a \$10 drive off,
they have to sell anywhere from two to three hundred gallons of gas. It is money that
retailers cannot recover or that retailers are forced to pass on to law-abiding customers,
affecting both gas prices and in-store convenience items such as food and beverages.